

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Fiscal Year 2008

The Amherst Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) received thirty-seven (37) applications during FY 08; all were for Special Permits. By comparison, forty-three (43) applications were submitted in FY 07.

Thirty-two (32) of the Special Permit applications were granted with conditions, two (2) were withdrawn without prejudice, and three (3) were still pending as of the end of FY 08. No Special Permit applications were denied.

One of the applications, a 17-unit PURD condominium development called Strawberry Fields proposed for an open area along South East Street, has been the subject of ongoing review by the ZBA for the past three (3) years, beginning with 24 units and a different ZBA panel. This application was continued six (6) times during FY08. On July 29, 2008 the ZBA closed the hearing. The ZBA is currently preparing conditions to be considered for a final decision.

Seven (7) Special Permits were granted in FY 08 for an increase in the number of dwelling units on a property (e.g., conversion to a two-family, conversion of existing detached barns, and the new supplemental apartments). These permits may result in a total of six (6) new dwelling units. Other residential activity included the approval of two (2) new flag lots and the renewal of three (3) previously-permitted flag lots. The new flag lots and dwelling units received development authorization dates under Section 14 of the Zoning Bylaw.

Special Permits of general interest included:

- The Hanger (restaurant) on University Drive was granted approval to add twenty (20) new parking spaces

- Watroba's (convenience store) on Sunderland Road was granted approval for the conversion of the first floor to include four (4) boarding suites, a manager's apartment, and office space

- Birdsong Bed & Breakfast at 815 South East Street was granted approval to provide lodging for up to six (6) guests

- Omnipoint was granted approval for a new wireless communication tower at the site of the old landfill on Belchertown Road, and was granted a modification to replace six (6) wireless antennas and add two (2) new antennas in the steeple/bell tower of St. Brigid's Catholic Church on North Pleasant Street

- The Alexander Technique School on Lessey Street was granted approval for parking improvements to an existing educational use

- Bank of America was granted approval to reconstruct and operate a drive-through ATM to replace their full service bank at the corner of East Pleasant Street and Triangle Street that had been destroyed by fire

- A home occupation was approved for a fashion design business at 46 Snell Street

Zoning Board of Appeals FY08 Membership:

Members

Tom Simpson, Chair

Barbara Ford, Vice-chair

Jane Ashby, Clerk

Associate Members

Hilda Greenbaum

Al Woodhull

Eric Beal

Ted Rising

The ZBA met fifty-one (51) times during FY 08. Planning Department staff members Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner, and Carolyn Holstein, Zoning Assistant, provided staff support to the Zoning Board of Appeals during FY 08.

In FY 09, an updated ZBA section on the Town website is planned, including meeting agendas and decisions from FY 05 to the present.